

The Essentials: Ephesians

Outline of the Letter to the Ephesians

Understanding the logical sequence of Ephesians can be challenging! Because the letter isn't a story, it is much easier to comprehend its holistic message by tending to its outline. On the most basic level, the letter is divided into two halves, marked by a switch from the indicative mood to the imperative at the beginning of chapter 4. In this way, **the letter is first about the hope we have in the reality of the Gospel of Jesus Christ (Chas. 1-3), then it is about what that means for our lives (Chas. 4-6)**. Paul describes what is simply true about believers in Christ and then fleshes out what it looks like for them to live in light of these truths. Below is a more detailed outline of the letter's order:

Introduction of praise and wonder at God's work in Christ (1:1-14)

Introduction of purpose: Encouragement to know our hope in Christ (1:15-23)

Primary articulation of the present, indicative hope (Cha. 2)

1. We received grace through faith (vv. 1-10)
2. We received grace through inclusion into the covenant people (vv. 11-22)

Biography (Cha. 3)

1. Description of how Paul's calling and its origin (vv. 1-13).
2. Reiteration of his hope to encourage the Ephesians (vv. 14-21)

General imperatives of the Gospel (Cha. 4)

1. Growing into our calling (vv. 1-16)
2. Growing in distinctive holiness (vv. 17-32)

Practical imperatives of the Gospel (Cha. 5-6)

1. Particular moral distinctives (5:1-21)
2. Household distinctives (5:22-6:9)

Readiness in the Gospel through the armor of God (6:10-6:24)